

Richfield High School 510 West 100 South Richfield, Utah 84701

March 5-6, 2008





Utah State Office of Education 250 East 500 South P.O. Box 144200 Salt Lake City, Utah 84114-4200

THE REPORT OF THE VISITING TEAM REVIEWING

Richfield High School

510 West 100 South Richfield, UT 84701

March 5-6, 2008

UTAH STATE OFFICE OF EDUCATION

Patti Harrington, Ed.D. State Superintendent of Public Instruction

DIVISION OF STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AND SCHOOL SUCCESS

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FOREWORD

The major purpose of the accreditation process is to stimulate school growth and improvement so as to increase student achievement.

In these efforts, the school staff makes a comprehensive evaluation of the school's programs, operations, and results. The school determines how actual practices align to stated objectives and resulting outcomes. It is a three-phased evaluation: (1) self-evaluation, (2) on-site evaluation by an external team of educators, and (3) implementation using units of the evaluation to improve the school by effecting thoughtful change.

The evaluation, March 5-6, 2008, was conducted because of the school's desire to ensure quality education for all students in the school, and to increase student achievement.

The entire staff of Richfield High School is commended for the time and effort devoted to studying and evaluating the various facets of the total program and to preparing the materials used by the visiting team. The excellent leadership given by Principal Randall Brown is also commended.

The staff and administration are congratulated for their desire for excellence at Richfield High School, and also for the professional attitude of all members of the group, which made it possible for them to see areas of weakness and strength and to suggest procedures for bringing about improvements.

While these recommendations may be used to solicit financial support to acquire some of the materials, equipment, and services needed to carry out a more effective program, it is even more important that the faculty and administration utilize them as they continue to evaluate and modify course offerings and administrative and classroom procedures to more dramatically increase student achievement at Richfield High School.

Patti Harrington, Ed.D. State Superintendent of Public Instruction

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RICHFIELD HIGH SCHOOL

ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF

School Administration

		Principal Assistant Principal			
Counseling					
	<u>Support Staff</u>				
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Annette Dickinson					
Robyn Southwick		Attendance Secretary			
Elaine Costa		Office			
Janeen Dunn		Financial Secretary			
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Shanna Sampson		Teaching Assistant			
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Amy Clegg	Michelle Nielson	Sharon Wall			
Rochelle Crimin	Jane Persons				
D 1 C CC	1.6 D				

Marc Peterson

Bob Cuff

RICHFIELD HIGH SCHOOL

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Richfield High School, in partnership with community, parent/guardians and students, is to prepare students to become caring, skilled, productive, and adaptive citizens.

BELIEF STATEMENTS

At Richfield High School, in Sevier School District, we believe that:

- 1. Education leads to a quality life.
- 2. Education provides the opportunities for students to become life-long learners and productive citizens.
- 3. Our school must intentionally provide students the opportunities to systematically develop the full spectrum of cognitive-level thinking skills.
- 4. Learning should be process-centered and should enhance each student's ability to solve problems, make decisions, take responsibility, and work in groups.
- 5. All knowledge is interrelated and should be taught that way.
- 6. Opportunities to participate in provided activities must be open according to student interest, aptitude, and citizenship.
- 7. Positive self-esteem contributes to quality of life.
- 9. Students will be self-directed, disciplined learners.
- 10. It is a mutual responsibility to treat each other with dignity and respect.

DESIRED RESULTS FOR STUDENT LEARNING (DRSLs)

Effective Communication

- 1. Students communicate with clarity, purpose and understanding of audience.
- 2. Students integrate the use of a variety of communication forms and use a wide variety of communication skills.
- 3. Students recognize and evaluate various forms of communication.

Reasoning Skills

- 1. Students gather information, interpret findings, and communicate results.
- 2. Students use reference material and student generated data to justify their results.
- 3. Students generate and evaluate multiple strategies to solve a variety of problems.

Responsible Citizens

- 1. Students take responsibility for personal actions and act ethically, while demonstrating honesty, fairness, integrity, and respect.
- 2. Student respect themselves and others.
- 3. Students will be exposed to cultural diversity and will develop tolerance.
- 4. Students act as responsible citizens in the community, state, and nation.

Life Long Learning

- 1. Students make a commitment to create quality work.
- 2. Students demonstrate a positive attitude and personal responsibility for learning and personal development.
- 3. Students will question their world.
- 4. Students reflect on and evaluate their performance for the purpose of improvement.

Date of visit: March 5-6, 2008

MEMBERS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Ben Lems, Mount Jordan Middle School, Jordan School District, Visiting Team Chairperson

Barry Jones, Enterprise High School, Washington School District

Todd Dawson, Enterprise High School, Washington School District

Brenda Wright, Riverview Junior High School, Murray School District

VISITING TEAM REPORT

RICHFIELD HIGH SCHOOL

CHAPTER 1: SCHOOL PROFILE

Richfield High School is located in Richfield, Utah, a rural community of approximately 20,000 residents. The main industries are farming, mining, and trucking. The community is very tight-knit and very supportive of Richfield High School. Parents, students, and teachers take pride in the school, its accomplishments and programs. Over the years, the school has gone through a number of consolidations, boundary adjustments, remodels, and reconstructions. The current school is housed in three separate buildings. The main administrative and educational building was built in 1961.

Richfield High School was first formed in September of 1897. The enrollment that first year was between 20 and 30 students. The school currently has an enrollment of 672 students in grades nine through 12, with a minority population of 14.9 percent. The largest minority population is the American Indian, at 12.8 percent. The majority of the American Indian population is housed in a dormitory located next to the campus. Enrollment has remained relatively steady over the past 30 years.

a) What significant findings were revealed by the school's analysis of its profile?

Demographic, ACT and CRT data is provided and disaggregated by gender and ethnicity. More disaggregated data is available but not included in the self-study. The school's desired results for student learning are well defined, and have been the basis for evaluating the effectiveness of departments. Departmental reports in the self-study were based on the desired results for student learning, rather than on the guiding questions. A review of the student, teacher, and parent surveys included in the self-study show a high degree of satisfaction with the school, the staff, the school climate, and the programs offered to students. All three groups showed a high degree of concern about drugs in the school, although students generally reported that it was not as much of a problem during school as it is among students outside of school hours.

b) What modifications to the school profile should the school consider for the future?

Richfield High School is encouraged to continue collecting data that will help guide the decision-making process of the school. This data should be disaggregated and analyzed by gender, ethnicity, at-risk, and socioeconomic status. Richfield High School is also encouraged to reexamine the action plan and to include timelines and benchmarks.

c) To what extent does the school's self-study accurately reflect the school's current strengths and limitations?

The school did a good job of addressing its own current levels of performance. However, little evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses was contained in the self-study. The school based its departmental analysis on how departments addressing the desired results for student learning. Not all departments were represented, and only one listed its own strengths and weaknesses. The self-study also reported on some demographic, ACT, and CRT data, but with little or no analysis of the data.

Suggested Areas for Further Inquiry:

- Review the effectiveness of each department, using the Essential Questions to identify strengths and weaknesses.
- Organize focus groups for the purpose of evaluating organizational effectiveness using the NSSE rubrics.
- Look for patterns with respect to which group or groups of students are learning and which are not learning.

CHAPTER 2: NORTHWEST ASSOCIATION OF ACCREDITED SCHOOLS (NAAS) TEACHING AND LEARNING STANDARDS

Mission, Beliefs and Desired Results for Student Learning (DRSLs):

a) To what degree were the school's mission statement, beliefs, and DRSLs developed and/or revised collaboratively by the school community to define a compelling purpose and vision for the school and to support student achievement?

There is evidence of some stakeholders being involved in the process of developing the school's beliefs and mission statement, but for the most part there was little input from the current students, teachers, parents, and community members. Portions of the school's profile data were considered in developing the beliefs, mission, and goals, but little effort was made to examine the latest findings of educational research and of future trends that have implications for student learning.

b) To what extent do the school's mission and beliefs align to support the school's DRSLs?

The alignment of the school's mission and belief statements seems to address the key issues of the school and to have some impact on the school's policies and decision-making. The mission statement describes the purpose and direction for the school, although there is evidence that most of the stakeholders do not know or understand the correlation among the mission statement, the school's beliefs, and the DRSLs.

c) Describe the indicators (measures) that have been developed to assess the school's progress in assessing the DRSLs.

It is apparent that the concepts in the DRSLs are being used in the teaching process, but for the most part, the DRSLs themselves are not explicitly a part of each teacher's lesson plans. Through interviews with students and parents, it was noted that few knew what a DRSL was.

d) To what extent do the school's mission, beliefs, and DRSLs guide the procedures, policies and decisions of the school, and appear evident in the culture of the school?

The Visiting Team found that the school is using the concepts contained within the school's, beliefs, and DSRLs to guide polices and procedures to some extent. There is little evidence, however, that the stakeholders are using them in a vigorous way. For the most part, the mission, beliefs, and DRSLs are not widely known or understood by the stakeholders.

Curriculum:

a) To what extent does the staff work collaboratively to ensure the curriculum is based on clearly defined standards, the Utah Core Curriculum, reflecting the Utah Life Skills: A Guide to Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions for Success?

Judging from interviews with the curriculum focus group members and with several teachers, especially in the case of core classes (math, language arts, and science), the State Core Curriculum is adhered to quite closely. In fact, the district sets aside time and money for the teachers throughout the district to get together with other teachers who teach the same subject in order to coordinate their curricula and textbooks. Since core classes also have CRT tests, those tests tend to drive the curriculum and keep teachers in line with what needs to be taught. The concurrent enrollment teachers have the special challenge of also to including material that the colleges require to be taught. Overall, it is felt that the school does a great job of teaching the required curriculum.

b) To what extent does the curriculum engage **all** students in inquiry, problem-solving, and higher-order thinking skills?

A great amount of effort and thought has been put into ensuring these items are in the curriculum, probably as a result of good teaching by most teachers and not necessarily because they were required for accreditation. Teachers use a variety of strategies, and the variety engages more students. Modeling of a thinking process, hands-on lab work, and other strategies require students to problem solve and use higher-order thinking. In one class, students were required to demonstrate how to work the logic in a math problem or to explain where they made mistakes on a test. Also noted was the use of short-answer test questions rather than multiple-choice questions. Science labs were used to encourage inquiry. Teachers agreed that the "Rigor and Relevancy" program has greatly improved teachers' ability to get all students to reach for higher thinking.

c) To what extent does the teaching staff work collaboratively to support the development of a curriculum that focuses on the school's DRSLs?

Each department had the job of deciding how to incorporate the DRSLs into its own curriculum. The departments meet together monthly to talk about the curriculum. Curriculum maps have been made by some departments, but the Visiting Team saw little evidence of the DRSLs' inclusion in those maps. It is felt that most teachers are including DRSLs in their instruction without consciously knowing that they are doing so. Many teachers could not actually state all four DRSLs.

d) How does the staff use assessments to drive curriculum to ensure that **all** students can reach the intended learning outcomes?

Teachers agreed that they look at their own assessments first, then look for reteaching needs. The CRT assessments give a good indication of weaknesses, but only in the past year's curriculum. As the CRT scores are not necessarily timely, the science and math teachers use their own quarterly tests (NWEA tests) to review and use as a guide on what needs to be re-taught prior to end-of-year CRTs. For students who really are struggling, the school has a "tutorial night" every Wednesday night. A grant funds former and current teachers to meet with students on a rotating basis every Wednesday evening to help tutor students.

Instruction:

a) To what extent do teachers use a variety of instructional strategies to enhance student learning?

Most teachers use a great variety of instructional strategies in their classrooms. Students agree that most teachers are not simply "work packet" or "video" teachers. Noted in classes were strategies such as group work; the teacher modeling a thinking process; and the use of online lessons, hands-on lab work,

games, and simulations. Teachers seemed to agree that a variety of strategies are the best way to meet all student-learning needs.

b) To what extent have the school and the staff developed strategies for instruction that build the capacity for explicitly teaching the identified DRSL in every classroom?

There was not significant evidence to show that teachers were explicitly teaching and identifying DRSLs in every classroom. Many were actually teaching DRSLs, but without knowing it and without pointing it out to students.

c) To what extent is the school's professional development program guided by identified instructional needs, and how does it provide opportunities for teachers to develop and improve their instructional strategies that support student learning?

The staff's professional development was created based on identified instructional needs, as evidenced by their "Rigor and Relevance" program. Teachers stated that this program gave them many more ideas for ways to teach students. Sometimes the strategies were not relevant to their particular classes, but several teachers stated that they have often adapted them to their particular subject with success. Teachers stated that being able to talk to other teachers in the district was helpful. When teachers could compare test scores with others in the district, the opportunity to identify weak points and to compare and share strategies was very effective in supporting improved student learning.

d) To what extent are teachers proficient in their content area, knowledgeable about current research on effective instructional approaches, and reflective on their own practices?

To the extent what the Visiting Team was able to determine, teachers seemed to be knowledgeable about current effective instruction. The professional development time in staff meetings seemed to be effective in this area. The Visiting Team agreed that of the teachers they talked to, all were very reflective on what they do in class and why they do it.

e) To what extent does the school effectively implement a well-defined plan for the integration of technology into its curriculum, instruction, and assessments?

There didn't seem to be evidence of a "well-defined" plan for integration of technology into the classroom, but there was, nonetheless, much technology integration in the school. Most rooms have overhead projectors linked to a computer and the Internet. The school has a portable lab for teachers to use. Language classes had the curriculum on the computers to provide a fun way for students to go through bookwork. Students have access to computers in a lab, and computers were accessible during the "tutorial night" study session. The clothing,

food, and science labs were equipped with up-to-date technology. Also, with access to the Technical College, Richfield students may make use of the most current technology available.

Assessment:

a) To what extent has the staff developed classroom or school-wide assessments with performance standards based on clearly articulated expectations for student achievement?

The staff has been using class-specific assessments to assess student learning. Such assessments are, generally speaking, created and administered by the individual teacher in his or her own classroom. However, on a school-wide basis, the faculty has recently begun using benchmark or "blueprint" assessments to assess student learning. The data from these benchmark tests is being used to drive instructional and curricular decisions.

The assessments in use are designed to assess student learning as it relates to the State Core Curriculum. The expectations for student achievement are communicated to the students in each specific class/subject. Efforts have been made to align the assessments with the expectations for student achievement, as well as the State Core Curriculum.

b) To what extent does the school have a process to fairly and equitably assess school-wide and individual progress in achieving academic expectations?

The school uses benchmark testing, end-of-level testing, and teacher-generated assessments throughout the course of the school year. These assessments are used to assess school-wide and individual progress. The assessments provide information to educators, students, and parents on learning in relation to academic expectations, such as the Core Curriculum and state standards.

c) To what extent does the professional staff use data to assess the success of the school in achieving its academic expectations?

In order to assess the success of the school in achieving academic expectations, the staff uses data from the CRTs to identify the proficiency level of individual students, as well as the student body collectively. This data helps the staff members determine how successful they are in meeting the goals outlined in the action plan.

d) To what extent does the school's professional development program allow for opportunities for teachers to collaborate in developing a broad range of student assessment strategies?

The Visiting Team found that the staff at Richfield High School has been involved in collaborating on both instructional and assessment strategies. This sharing of ideas and methods is taking place in faculty meetings that also serve as a means of providing professional development opportunities. The ideas and methods presented in such a setting then become part of the "teaching toolbox," a collection of methods that are designed to enhance student learning.

e) To what extent is there organizational agreement on the use of a school-wide scoring tool to assess the identified DRSL?

The Visiting Team found that there was no indication of a school-wide scoring tool to assess student achievement of the DRSLs.

CHAPTER 3: NAAS SUPPORT STANDARDS

Leadership and Organization:

a) To what extent does the school leadership promote quality instruction by fostering an academic learning climate that actively supports teaching and learning?

The school leadership team is comprised primarily of the school's administration. Teachers indicated during interviews that administrators were interested in how the students were doing. Many teachers felt that the administrators were genuinely interested in establishing a climate that fostered teaching and learning. The administrators indicated a strong desire to listen to teachers and to develop plans that address their concerns. Students stated that the administration of Richfield High School is concerned about their personal and educational needs. Furthermore, teachers noted that the administration did what it could to provide instructional staff members with the resources and equipment they needed for effective instruction. During faculty meetings, time is set aside for teachers to share successful teaching strategies they have used in the classroom.

b) To what extent does the school leadership employ effective decision making that is data-driven, research-based, and collaborative to monitor progress in student achievement and instructional effectiveness?

The school's leadership team reviews data generated by the UBSCT, ACT, CRT, and other assessments to make effective decisions at the school. The principal consults with those who have a stake in the decision that is to be made for their input whenever possible. The Visiting Team recommends that the school implement a system for collaboration among departments, parents, and students in the decision-making process.

c) To what extent does the leadership provide skillful stewardship by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and allocation and use of resources at the school for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment which aligns with the school goals, DRSLs, and school improvement?

The leadership at Richfield High School has developed a school with a safe and orderly environment. The environment in the school makes it possible for effective teaching and learning to take place.

d) To what extent does the school leadership empower the entire school community and encourage commitment, participation, collaboration, and shared responsibility for student learning through meaningful roles in the decision-making process?

Although it has been difficult to involve parents and students in the decision-making process, the principal and leadership team of the school have provided opportunities for all stakeholders to have input on decisions made by the school. The school's Community Council is active and is a valuable resource for the school. All major decisions affecting the school are discussed with the Community Council before being implemented.

e) To what extent has the school established a formal system through which each student has an adult staff member who knows the student well and assists the student in achieving the school-wide expectations for student learning?

During interviews, students expressed being comfortable with the idea of going to any staff member for help if necessary. They especially felt comfortable going to members of the administration.

Students also indicated that the counseling staff at Richfield High School was very helpful and kind. However, when asked who they would go to if they were having a personal problem, the majority of the students said they would go to a teacher or to the principal. They viewed the counselors as primarily concerned with class schedules, help with graduation requirements, and testing.

School Services:

This standard is dealt with in the school's NAAS Annual Report, which requires specific responses and information regarding student support services, guidance services, health services, library information services, special education services, and family and community services.

Facilities and Finances:

This standard is addressed in the school's annual report to NAAS, which requires specific responses regarding the physical plant, finances, audit of school records, advertising, etc.

CHAPTER 4: NAAS SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT STANDARD

Culture of Continual Improvement:

- a) To what extent has the school developed and implemented a comprehensive school improvement plan using Collaborating for Student Achievement, the Utah accreditation/school improvement process that is reviewed and revised on an ongoing basis?
 - The Visiting Team found evidence of a school-wide improvement plan that is being used in most classrooms. Teachers are continuing to try to find new ways to improve student learning.
- b) To what extent does the school build skills and the capacity for improvement through an aligned and ongoing professional development plan focused on the school's goals for improvement?
 - The staff has been involved in a bi-monthly professional development meeting. The teachers have developed a "teaching toolbox" as a resource for teaching strategies. Teachers are sent to professional development meetings to improve teaching methods and strategies in the classroom. Teachers seem to be very open to improvement for the school and in the classroom.
- c) To what extent is the new/revised school-wide action plan adequate in addressing the critical areas for follow-up and is there sufficient commitment to the action plan, school-wide and system-wide?
 - The Visiting Team sees a lack of specificity in the school's actions plans relating to school needs, time frames, and specific goals associated with each action plan. The action plans seem to be somewhat vague and incomplete in these areas.
- *d)* To what extent does the school create conditions that support productive change and continuous improvement?
 - The stakeholders at Richfield High School seem to share a strong commitment to the school's direction. However, it is apparent to the Visiting Team that none of the students even know what a DRSL is even though the concepts within the DRSLs are being used in the classroom.

e) What significant progress has been made in implementing the original action plan since the last full visit?

The staff of Richfield High School has revisited the school's action plan since the original full visit, and has made modifications that have better aligned the action plan to the school's mission, beliefs, and DRSLs. The Visiting Team recommends that the school continue to refine its action plan to include time lines, needed resources, and action steps. Data also needs to be disaggregated further to ensure that the needs of all students are met.

f) What significant progress has the school made in addressing the **major** recommendations of the previous Visiting Team and/or review team?

Richfield High School has made good progress in addressing the major recommendations of the previous Visiting Team. The school profile contains data that has helped the school identify areas of concern. Further disaggregation of data is recommended, and staff members are encouraged to include individual classroom data in their self-analyses as they make curriculum-related decisions.

Focus groups have been organized and work has begun on evaluating the seven focus areas using the NSSE rubrics. It is critical that all stakeholders, including teachers, parents, students, and other appropriate individuals, be included in the process.

The school profile included departmental analysis based on the school's DRSLs for most departments. It is recommended that the school further analyze the strengths and weaknesses of each department using the Essential Questions.

The Visiting Team observed that some collaboration among teachers and departments is taking place. The school is encouraged to seek innovative ways to increase the opportunity for more departmental and cross-curricular collaboration.

CHAPTER 5: COMMUNITY BUILDING

a) To what extent does the school foster community building and working relationships within the school?

The Visiting Team found that efforts are continually being made to foster working relationships and build a sense of community within the school. Richfield High School has a unique campus consisting of multiple buildings, some of which are separated by significant distances. This presents a challenge to maintaining working relationships among staff members. However, the Visiting Team found

that teachers, generally through departmental interaction, are striving to maintain working relationships.

b) To what extent does the school extend the school community through collaborative networks that support student learning?

The Visiting Team found that the staff has made plans and taken action to use collaborative networks to support student learning by sharing instructional strategies; providing interventions for struggling students; collaborating in departments; and supporting students, parents, and other faculty members.

c) To what extent has the school engaged the school community in a collaborative self-study process on behalf of students?

The Visiting Team found that the school community has played a minimal role in the self-study process. This is shown by little awareness or intentional use of the DRSLs in the instructional setting. Also, some staff members had limited participation in focus group analysis, and demonstrate a lack of understanding of the self-study process.

d) How are results of school improvement identified, documented, used, and communicated to **all** stakeholders?

The Visiting Team found little evidence of measurable data relating to school improvement results. The school's action plan identifies indicators of goal achievement; however, few such indicators are measurable or connected to a time frame.

CHAPTER 6: MAJOR COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Commendations:

- The Visiting Team commends the administrative team for setting a comfortable, safe, and positive educational climate for students and teachers. Both students and teachers appreciated the ability to approach any member of the administrative team with concerns or questions. Parents also indicated they felt safe and welcome anytime they came to the school. There exists a positive working relationship among all stakeholders.
- The Visiting Team commends members of the teaching staff of Richfield High School for their professionalism, dedication, and commitment to the learning

process. Students and parents appreciated the fact that teachers are accessible and willing to help whenever there is a question or concern.

- The Visiting Team commends Richfield High School for the variety of teaching strategies implemented by the majority of teachers to keep students engaged and to address the varied needs of students.
- The Visiting Team commends the school for the efforts that have been made to upgrade and improve the technology at the school and to make that technology available to all staff members and students in an attempt to improve student achievement.
- The Visiting Team commends the school for providing opportunities for students to further develop their skills and interests beyond the classroom. Many academic, athletic, and service-oriented extracurricular activities that are in line with the school's mission and belief statements and address the desired results for student learning are in place for students
- The Visiting Team recognizes the difficulty of maintaining an old facility spread among three different buildings, and commends the staff, including the custodial staff, for maintaining a clean and comfortable school environment.

Recommendations:

- The Visiting Team recommends that staff members explicitly include the school's desired results for student learning in their daily instruction by connecting what is being taught with one or more of the school's identified goals for student learning.
- The Visiting Team recommends that the staff of Richfield High School dig a little deeper into its departmental analyses and identify each department's strengths and weaknesses. The Visiting Team further recommends that each department look for ways to improve student achievement based on this deeper analysis.
- The Visiting Team recommends that Richfield High School further disaggregate its data to include at-risk subgroups and socioeconomic classes. This disaggregated data can be used to identify areas for improvement. The Visiting Team also recommends that data in addition to school-wide and norm- and criterion-referenced data—such as classroom assessments and anecdotal information—be considered when evaluating student progress.
- The Visiting Team recommends that Richfield High School organize focus groups to evaluate the seven organizational standards using the NSSE rubrics. Focus groups should include representatives from all stakeholder groups, such as teachers, classified staff members, students, parents, and other appropriate stakeholders.

•	The Visiting Team recommends that the school revisit and refine its action plan to include timelines, needed resources, and specific action steps.